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***WPD601 08/12/2006**
Security Council Unanimous on Ending Mideast Hostilities
(Rice: "A good first step" to help Lebanon, Israel) (1410)

By Judy Aita
Washington File Staff Writer

United Nations -- The Security Council unanimously adopted a resolution calling for an immediate end to the fighting between Hezbollah and Israel and authorized an expanded U.N. peacekeeping force to help the Lebanese army take control of southern Lebanon as Israel withdraws.

The council also imposed a total arms embargo on all weapons going into Lebanon except those for use by the government of Lebanon.

Lebanese Prime Minister Fuad Siniora said his government, which includes two Hezbollah ministers, had agreed unanimously to the resolution. The Israeli cabinet will consider the resolution on August 13.

In a statement issued from his ranch in Crawford, Texas, President Bush welcomed the resolution. "The loss of innocent life in both Lebanon and Israel has been a great tragedy. Hezbollah and its Iranian and Syrian sponsors have brought an unwanted war to the people of Lebanon and Israel, and millions have suffered as a result. I now urge the international community to turn words into action and make every effort to bring lasting peace to the region," said the president.

U.S. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice called the resolution "a first step, but a good first step" in dealing with the fighting and turbulent political situation.

In many respects, the hard work of diplomacy is just beginning, Rice told the 15-nation Security Council before voting on August 11. "Though it is our hope that this resolution will lead to the cessation of large-scale hostilities, no one should expect an immediate end to all acts of violence.

"The conditions of a lasting peace must be nurtured over time, with the goodwill of the Lebanese and Israeli government, and with the sustained commitment of the international community," she said.

Through the resolution, the council attempts to get an immediate end to the fighting that has killed over a thousand and displaced close to one million people. The resolution tries to set out a series of steps leading to a permanent cease-fire and long-term solution. One of the most difficult points in drafting the resolution was devising a way to ensure that Hezbollah does not re-infiltrate the area once Israel withdraws.

Secretary General Kofi Annan said that over the weekend he will work with both parties to fix the exact date and time when the cessation of hostilities will come into effect.

The council asked the secretary general to report back in one week on how the resolution was being implemented.

The most pressing challenge now "is to help the thousands of displaced people within Lebanon to return to their homes and rebuild their lives. The reconstruction of Lebanon will be led by the government of Lebanon, but it will demand the generosity of the entire international community," Rice said.

The United States, the secretary said, will be increasing its immediate assistance to Lebanon to \$50 million.

Rice demanded other nations stop interfering in Lebanon and called on every state "especially Iran and Syria, to respect the sovereignty of the Lebanese government and the will of the international community" regarding the embargo on all weapons heading into the country without the government's consent.

Hezbollah and its sponsors have brought devastation upon the people of Lebanon dragging them into a war they did not choose and exploiting them as human shields, the secretary of state said.

"The people of the Middle East have lived for too long at the mercy of extremists," she said. "It is time to build a more hopeful future and this resolution shows us the way.

"It is now the solemn responsibility of the international community to help the people of Lebanon and Israel to transform this tragedy into opportunity -- an opportunity to overcome old patterns of violence and to build a new foundation for stable and sustainable peace," she said.

The resolution calls for "a full cessation of hostilities" based upon "the immediate cessation by Hezbollah of all attacks and the immediate cessation by Israel of all offensive military operations." "In parallel" once the fighting ends, Israel is to withdraw from southern Lebanon as a 15,000-force Lebanese army -- with the help of the 15,000 troops of an expanded U.N. Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) -- moves into the area all the way to the Lebanese-Israeli border, known as the Blue Line.

Lebanon must take control of the south "so that there will be no weapons without the consent of the government of Lebanon and no authority other than that of the government of Lebanon," the resolution states.

Lebanese Prime Minister Fouad Siniora's pledge to send 15,000 Lebanese forces to the south was crucial in helping negotiators work out an agreement after days of intense efforts to draw up the four-page, 19-point resolution.

The council stressed the importance of not just ending the violence but addressing the cause of the crisis "including the unconditional release of the abducted Israeli soldiers." It encourages efforts to settle the issue of Lebanese prisoners detained in Israel but does not explicitly call for a prisoner exchange.

In an interview with CNN after the adoption of the resolution, Rice said: "The return of the Israeli soldiers should be unconditional. And that has been stated in numerous documents. It's stated in this document. There is a sensitive issue about Lebanese prisoners. But I want to be clear. There isn't a linkage here and there is no prisoner exchange that is even envisioned in this resolution."

UNIFIL -- with its expanded number of troops and better equipment -- will not only monitor the cessation of hostilities and support the Lebanese army, but also will help ensure that humanitarian aid reaches civilians and assist the safe return of displaced civilians.

In the resolution, council authorized UNIFIL "to take all necessary action . . . as it deems within its capabilities to ensure that its area of operations is not utilized for hostile activities of any kind (and) to resist attempts by forceful means to prevent it from discharging its duties." It extended UNIFIL's mandate for one year.

A permanent cease-fire and long-term solution will be established based on: full respect for the Blue Line; security arrangements to prevent the resumption of hostilities; the establishment of a buffer zone between the Blue Line and the Litani River "free of any armed personnel, assets and weapons other than those of the government of Lebanon and UNIFIL;" disarmament of all armed groups in Lebanon, and providing maps of minefields in Lebanon to the United Nations, the council said.

Within 30 days, the secretary general is to present plans for implementing the council resolutions and the Taif Accords; the delineation of Lebanon's international border, including the contested Shebaa farms area; and the disarming of militias.

The resolution, Rice said, lays the foundation for a durable cease-fire and a decisive change from the status quo that produced the war.

The Security Council has said that it intends to adopt another resolution with further measures to help the cease-fire become permanent, the secretary noted.

While welcoming the resolution, Secretary General Annan criticized the council for not calling for an immediate cessation of hostilities "much, much earlier."

"I am convinced that my disappointment and sense of frustration are shared by hundreds of millions of people around the world," Annan said.

In an interview with Fox News, Rice said: "We always wanted this to happen as quickly as possible, but the conditions had to be there so that you can't have a state within a state again going across the Blue Line, attacking Israel, and then causing -- sort of plunging the region into chaos."

Foreign Minister Hamad bin Jassem Al Thani of Qatar said that Arab nations would be submitting a formal request for a Security Council ministerial meeting in September to work out a new regional peace plan.

The resolution, drafted by the United States and France, was also co-sponsored by Denmark, Ghana, Greece, Slovakia, and the United Kingdom. In addition to U.S. Secretary of State Rice, the foreign ministers of France, Denmark, Greece, Ghana, Qatar and the United Kingdom attended the meeting.

Secretary Rice's statement and interviews with several news networks can be found on the State Department Web site (<http://www.state.gov/>).

For the full text of Resolution 1701 (<http://www.un.org/News/Press/docs//2006/sc8808.doc.htm>), visit the United Nations Web site.

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*WPD602 08/12/2006

Bush Calls For Patience, Resolve in Face of Terror Threats

(Says arrests in U.K. due to international and interagency cooperation) (380)

Washington -- President Bush warned that the plot by more than 20 individuals in the United Kingdom to detonate liquid explosives aboard flights to the United States is "further evidence that the terrorists we face are sophisticated, and constantly changing their tactics." (See related article (<http://usinfo.state.gov/xarchives/display.html?p=washfile-english&y=2006&m=August&x=20060810101148idybeekcm0.7115747>).)

Speaking in his weekly radio address to the American public August 12, Bush praised the arrests of the would-be terrorists as "the culmination of hard work, cooperation, and information-sharing across different agencies and different governments," but he said that although the arrests "have significantly disrupted the threat ... we cannot be sure that the threat has been eliminated."

Bush called for "patience, cooperation, and vigilance" on the part of travelers in the coming days, saying, "The inconveniences you will face are for your protection, and they will give us time to adjust our screening procedures to meet the current threat."

Liquids have been temporarily banned as carry-on items on all flights. In addition, U.S. authorities have raised the threat warning for flights from the United Kingdom to the United States to the highest level, "Code Red," and issued a "Code Orange," the second highest threat level, for all domestic and international flights landing in the United States. The president said additional U.S. federal air marshals have been sent to the United Kingdom to provide extra protection aboard flights to the United States. (See related article (<http://usinfo.state.gov/xarchives/display.html?p=washfile-english&y=2006&m=August&x=20060810101148idybeekcm0.7115747>).)

The president said the United States "is safer than it was" prior to the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, but the danger of terrorism remains.

"This week's experience reminds us of a hard fact: The terrorists have to succeed only once to achieve their goal of mass murder, while we have to succeed every time to stop them," he said.

Bush called for "patience, courage, and untiring resolve," and said the terrorists seeking to kill innocent civilians "need to know that America, Great Britain, and our allies are determined to defend ourselves and advance the cause of liberty."

The full transcript (<http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2006/08/20060812.html>) of the president's radio address can be found at the White House Web site.

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*WPD603 08/12/2006
Tokyo Donors Call For End of Violence in Sri Lanka
(Ongoing fighting could trigger humanitarian disaster) (470)

By Melody Merin
Washington File Staff Writer

Washington -- Concerned about the growing humanitarian crisis in Sri Lanka, the Co-Chairs of the Tokyo Donor Conference—the United States, the European Union, Japan and Norway—call on the Sri Lankan government and the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) "to cease hostilities immediately and return to the negotiation table," according to a statement issued August 11 by the Department of State.

The Tokyo Donor Conference was held on June 9 and 10, 2003 in Tokyo, with the participation of representatives from 51 countries and 22 international organizations, in order to provide support for the

Sri Lankan peace process. (See related article (<http://usinfo.state.gov/xarchives/display.html?p=washfile-english&y=2003&m=June&x=20030612100502namfuaks0.8872339>).)

According to news reports, the recent fighting that broke out more than two weeks ago has left more than 500 people dead. Sri Lankan officials say some 150 rebels were killed August 12 as they attacked military front lines. Also, 27 military personnel were killed and 80 wounded.

The escalating violence between the two parties has forced a large number of people to flee their homes in the Trincomalee district. This is in addition to the numerous numbers of Sri Lankans who have already been displaced.

"Violence is not the way to resolve the ethnic conflict in Sri Lanka. The suffering inflicted on innocent civilians is intolerable," said State Department spokesman Sean McCormack.

U.S. Assistant Secretary of State for South and Central Asian Affairs Richard Boucher spelled out the U.S. policy on the Sri Lanka conflict in a speech to the American Chamber of Commerce in Colombo, Sri Lanka, June 1. He said the United States supports the democratically elected Sri Lankan government and condemns the LTTE for its "scores of unprovoked attacks on civilians and military personnel, [and] assassinations and suicide operations. At the same time, Boucher stated that the Tamil minority has "a very legitimate desire ... to be able to control their own lives, to rule their own destinies and to govern themselves in their own homeland, in the areas they've traditionally inhabited." (See related article (<http://usinfo.state.gov/is/Archive/2006/Jun/04-781944.html>).)

Violence between the Sri Lankan government and the LTTE has been going on despite a cease-fire negotiated in 2002. One example was the assassination of Sri Lankan Foreign Minister Lakshman Kadirgamar in August 12, 2005, followed by an assassination campaign conducted by the Karuna faction, a breakaway faction of the LTTE, which resulted in nearly 200 deaths.

The Co-Chairs called for independent, international investigations of allegations of serious human rights abuses and maintained their commitment to "supporting the peace process."

Meanwhile another meeting of the Co-Chairs is being planned to fully discuss the ongoing situation and the necessary actions that will be needed.

For more information, see 2005 South Asia Terrorism Overview (<http://www.state.gov/documents/organization/65475.pdf>) (PDF – 9 pages).

(The Washington File is a product of the Bureau of International Information Programs, U.S. Department of State. Web site: <http://usinfo.state.gov>)

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